



# Long-Term Health Consequences of Exposure to Burn Pits in Iraq and Afghanistan

*Committee on the Long-Term Health Consequences of Exposure to Burn Pits in Iraq and Afghanistan, Board  
on the Health of Select Populations, Institute of Medicine*

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Many veterans returning from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have health problems they believe are related to their exposure to the smoke from the burning of waste in open-air "burn pits" on military bases. Particular controversy surrounds the burn pit used to dispose of solid waste at Joint Base Balad in Iraq, which burned up to 200 tons of waste per day in 2007. The Department of Veterans Affairs asked the IOM to form a committee to determine the long-term health effects from exposure to these burn pits. Insufficient evidence prevented the IOM committee from developing firm conclusions. This report, therefore, recommends that, along with more efficient data-gathering methods, a study be conducted that would evaluate the health status of service members from their time of deployment over many years to determine their incidence of chronic diseases.

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